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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 KARACHI 000784

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [PREL](#) [ASEC](#) [CASC](#) [PK](#)
SUBJECT: SINDH GOVERNOR SUMMONS THE CONSULAR CORPS TO HIGH
TEA

REF: ISLAMABAD 4728

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Classified By: Consul General Kay Anske, reasons 1.4 (b), (d)

11. (C) Summary: On November 5, 2007, the Governor of Sindh summoned all Consuls General for a meeting to explain and justify the recent declaration of a State of Emergency. Within the one-sided conversation, the Governor touched upon press freedom, judicial activism, and how the abuse of freedom by the media and courts was adversely affecting the economy and the Global War on Terror (GWOT). End summary.

12. (C) On November 5, 2007, Governor of Sindh Ishrat-ul-Ebad Khan summoned all Consuls General to Governor's House for a Hi-Tea. There were 2 teas held) one for Islamic nations and one for all others. Among those countries represented at the &others8 were China, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Poland, Romania (Trade Rep only), Russia, Sri Lanka, Switzerland, UK, and US. The &others8 tea lasted close to two hours. (Note: The Governor is a member of the Muttahida Quami Movement (MQM), which is in the ruling party,s coalition. End note.)

The State of Emergency

13. (C) The Governor started the meeting by giving the three main reasons for the State of Emergency (SOE)) to stop the de-stabilization process; terrorist activity, especially the recent upsurge; and judicial activism. He stated that only certain clauses of the Constitution were suspended. Thus this SOE is actually strengthening, not weakening, Pakistan.

14. (C) This was the first time in Pakistan,s history that the Parliament would be completing its term. The GoP wants a free and fair election and a smooth transition. To achieve this, the GoP entered into a reconciliation process and made compromises with the opposition. The GoP had &cautiously8 allowed freedom of the media. Musharraf was the only leader to have done so; no previous leader had permitted freedom to the media. In addition, the judiciary had been allowed to freely decide cases. However, both the media and the judiciary had abused their freedom.

15. (C) The GoP has focused on economic development, infrastructure, privatization, liberalization, and development of all sectors in both urban and rural areas. If statistics of today are compared with those of 5 or 6 years ago, significant progress could be seen. The biggest achievements of Musharraf have been: Parliament completing its term, freedom of the media, and freedom of the judiciary. All this has lead to economic progress, stronger defense,

and reconciliation.

¶16. (C) The Governor said that the decision to go to a State of Emergency was taken in good faith. In the past, emergency actions were taken only to topple a government. Today, the emergency was declared to sustain the present Government until Parliament finishes its term and new elections are held.

¶17. (C) Pakistan is committed to the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) and is a front line state in fighting terrorism. In order to fight terrorism, a country needed a stable economy. Unfortunately, the media and the judiciary, by abusing their freedom, were endangering the economic progress that had been achieved.

¶18. (C) In the meetings leading to the declaring of the SOE, various options were discussed. According to the Governor, all attending agreed that Musharraf had provided the strong leadership needed to sustain the GWOT. Therefore, Pakistan could not afford to have Musharraf leave office. Unfortunately, the backlash is from political parties unable to win votes and therefore, who have exploited the freedom of the media and judiciary for their own ends.

Judicial Activism

¶19. (C) In the past few months, the judiciary had taken over the job of the executive branch. The courts were over-exuberant and making rulings on sui moto filings that should never have been filed with the courts. About 1,000 sui moto motions were still pending. The courts were releasing accused criminals and terrorists before investigations were completed. In Sindh, 48 terrorists, including Akram Lahori (sic), were declared acquitted with no reasons provided. The executive branch was blocked by the courts and a lot of time was spent in traveling and

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testifying before the courts. With court appearances and the court ordered activities, the executive branch was neglecting its usual work. As a result, terrorists were permitted to freely go about their business (of terror).

¶10. (C) In the province of Sindh, there has been 100 percent success in solving terrorism cases in the last 5-6 years. This was not easy to do given the very size of Karachi. The GoP has reached out to the grassroots to make contact with people. Thus, when something bad happens, there is no resentment or resulting violence.

The Media

¶11. (C) The Governor said that Musharraf had given freedom to the media and continues to be committed to freedom for the media. However, a few news people imposed or inserted political opinion into their news reports. As a result, little negative things were blown out of proportion. The economic situation had progressed greatly under Musharraf. But economic progress was being derailed by the over-activity of the courts and the media.

¶12. (C) The GoP is committed to strengthening the political structure, which includes freedoms such as freedom of the press. The media in the United Kingdom and United States do not show terrorism in a depressing manner. But in Pakistan, the media gives a bad view, showing Pakistan as a failed state and thus the media needs more time to mature. The Governor emphasized that the GoP could not allow such bad views and exaggeration. The number one priority of the media should be the national interest, not their own individual interests. The GoP wants a media that is objective and will work for the national interest.

The Upcoming Elections

¶13. (C) When asked if the elections were to be delayed, the Governor responded that any delay would be in accordance with the Constitution. To have elections, a peaceful environment was needed. Musharraf is committed to holding elections on time and not dissolving Parliament. The SOE meant that there was not a peaceful environment conducive to holding elections. However, the decision to delay the elections had not yet been made.

¶14. (C) Parliament is the supreme body and it chose Musharraf to be President with 57 percent of the votes cast. Since Parliament is elected and represents the voters, one could argue that 57 percent of the electorate chose Musharraf to be President. The majority of Pakistanis is moderate and continues to support Musharraf.

¶15. (C) When asked about allowing political activity, the Governor responded that the GoP must protect the ordinary citizen. It had been criticized for not taking action sooner with the Red Mosque incident. The GoP continues to arrest suspects but the courts continue to release them. In at least one case, the released suspected terrorist then went on to commit other acts of terrorism. Therefore, in order to protect its citizens, the GoP must control political activity. Extraordinary circumstances needed extraordinary responses.

And in conclusion(.

¶16. (C) The Governor stated that total freedom is simply not possible, as terrorists will exploit the freedom. A government must balance the Constitution and freedoms granted with the need to protect society. The Governor stated that it had been a mistake to grant so much freedom in such a short period of time. Therefore, the GoP must now limit freedom.

¶17. (C) The Governor concluded by repeating that Pakistan is a moderate state. The GoP could not allow extremists to take control, not even in certain parts. Therefore, the GoP was activating the &silent majority8 through the declaration of the SOE.

Comment

¶18. (C) The meeting was more of a staged event with the press present for at least half of the meeting. The Governor justified the State of Emergency, as would be expected. It

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appeared that the Governor had been given a set of talking points, which he repeated in different words, again and again. Only the US CG and the UK (representing HMG and EU) expressed their respective Governments, grave concerns. Hopefully the messages from the UK, EU and US were understood and forwarded to Islamabad.

¶19. (C) On a different note, about the same time as this &hi-tea8 with the Governor, just a block or so away, the police were storming the Bar Association Room at the Sindh High Court, beating attorneys with their police batons and arresting about 50 attorneys. Also about the same time, just down the street from the Governor,s House, the police and Rangers were storming the Karachi Press Club, beating protestors with their police batons and arresting journalists and political leaders.

ANSKE